

Advocate and Messenger

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136th Year MAY 1997 No. 5

Advocate
and
Messenger

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE" — Eph. 4:15

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THE FATHER'S GREAT HANDS

A child took father's hands in his
And said, "How big they are!
Then father said, "Ah, yes, my child,
But God's are bigger far."
"How big, dear father, must they be?"
The child said with a groan.
"They're big enough, my precious child,
To hold each of His own."
"Upon the palms of His great hands
Is every heir engraved,
And since they cannot be erased,
They'll all, at last, be saved."

7-14-94 R.E.H.

Send all copy for publication, before the 15th of the month, to:
ELDER RALPH E. HARRIS, Editor
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Advocate and Messenger

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EDITORIAL STAFF

ELDER RALPH E. HARRIS, Editor 3687 King Rd., Caryville, Fla. 32427

Associate Editors, all Elders:

DENNIS H. JONES 927 McArthur Blvd., Warner Robins, Ga. 31093

RAYMOND WEBB 106 Ash St., Carthage, Il. 62321

LONNIE MOZINGO, JR. 152 Lori Lee Dr., Gallatin, Tn. 37066

MARK GREEN 156 Davis Rd., Booneville, Ar. 72927

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A WORD ABOUT THE NATIONAL PREACHER'S MEETING

In view of some things that have recently been written in defense of the national preacher's meeting that has been held in Cincinnati, Ohio, each year since 1992, I feel it is needful that I make the following brief statement:

I have no objection whatsoever to older ministers teaching younger ministers as they have opportunity and insofar as the younger ministers have any interest in being taught (some of them appear not to *want* any instruction), but I do not believe a national preacher's meeting is the way that should be done. And to my way of thinking the fact that in some areas of the country young ministers are not

being adequately taught does not justify the establishment of a practice that I can find no Biblical or historical precedent for.

Everything that the Bible instructs us to do can easily be done in a setting other than in a national preacher's meeting, and I find nowhere in the Scriptures where any duty God has laid upon us can be better performed in such a setting. I find nowhere in the Scriptures where any duty can be better performed by separating ourselves from a major segment of the church and meeting as a separate class of believers.

I firmly believe that if the present liberal trend among the Primitive Baptists is persisted in, and at this point I believe it will be, it will eventually and ultimately result in things which its promoters never intended or desired. One thing I do know is that it has already created a tremendous amount of unrest and distress among the Old Baptist Family. That, within itself, should tell those who are pushing it that there is something wrong with it.

It is urged that if we refrain from doing a thing because there are objections to it we would never do anything. Perhaps that is true, but where the Old Church is concerned we could use that same reasoning to justify anything we might want to introduce, no matter how much trouble it caused.

Every movement I have ever witnessed that has created problems among churches and brethren was justified by its promoters on the grounds that God was richly blessing their efforts and that they obviously had His felt presence with them in it. I do not believe further comment on that is necessary.

Some may misunderstand my reasons for writing this and be offended, but my first responsibility is to my God, and I have to live with myself and my own conscience.

As of now my only hope is that the Lord will convict the liberal brethren of their errors and give them grace to repent and change their course before it is too late. —*Editor*.

No tradition of men will ever be practiced long enough to achieve sacred authority.

HOPE —A PRECIOUS GIFT

Primitive Baptists have often been criticized and even ridiculed and insulted for speaking of their eternal salvation in terms of *hope*. I have actually heard people of other orders say, "If I didn't have anything but a *hope* I would be ashamed of myself." But even the apostle Paul lived "in *hope* of eternal life" (Titus 1:2), and spoke of the saints rejoicing "in *hope* of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2 & 12:12). It appears to me that when people speak disparagingly or slighting of hope they thus distance themselves from the inspired apostle and say in effect that they are strangers to his experience.

When Brother Paul spoke of some in Ephesians 2:12 as "*having no hope*" he also said they were "without God in the world". And he also taught that those who "have no hope" grieve at the loss of their loved ones in a way that those who *do* have hope do *not* grieve (I Thes. 4:13). This indicates to me that hope is a very valuable possession. I personally can hardly bear the thoughts of being without it.

The apostle also tells us that "whatsoever things were written aforetime (*of old*) were written for our learning," and, "that we...might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). What I read in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, constitutes the basis for a great part of my hope in Christ. And in fact, Christ *is* my hope (See I Tim. 1:1 & Col. 1:27), and I pity those who disparage *hope*, for in so doing they disparage my Lord.

Paul makes *many* references to hope and in one instance speaks of it as a "good hope through grace" (II Thes. 2:16) and he says that God the father "gave" us that good hope. Of course if *God* gave it, it has to be good, for all "good and perfect gifts" come from Him (James 1:17).

Because there are some references to our "*knowing*" certain things, such as that we "have passed from death unto life", that we are "of the truth"; that we "have eternal life", etc., (I John 3:14, 3:19 & 5:13), some have thought they must have something more than a "hope" of eternal life, otherwise they think they would never "be saved". But Paul also taught that "hope that is *seen* is not

hope" (Rom. 8:24). If we were able to *know* that we have eternal life *now* in the same way we will know we have it *in heaven*, then hope would already be done away and would have no place in Christian experience.

The "knowing" of the above scriptures, and others like them, is not a *perfect* knowledge. *Perfect* knowledge is reserved for the *perfect hereafter*. Now we only "know in part" (I Cor. 13:9), and often our "knowing" has reference to "full assurance" (Col. 2:2 & Heb. 6:11) and to "strong consolation" (Heb. 6:18), and many times in our experience we do not have either of these.

Even John the Baptist sometimes had his doubts (Matt. 11:3). We are human just like he was and we will sometimes have ours too, but if the Lord has given us a "good hope through grace" it will never entirely leave us (See Heb. 6:11 & I Peter 1:13). Hope is a very precious and wonderful thing, and though some may be ashamed of it, "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). I would never dare to make light of hope, and I fear for those who do.—*Editor*.

THE REGENERATE AND THE UNREGENERATE

One of the great fallacies of arminianism is that it calls upon unregenerate men and women to do that which no unregenerate can do. It requires them to perform spiritual *acts* in order to become spiritual *beings*—an utter impossibility. The apostle Paul taught that it is by God's mercy that His people are saved, "by the washing of *regeneration*, and renewing of the *Holy Ghost*" (Titus 3:5). Nowhere in all the word of God is there any *hint* that He requires any unregenerated persons to do anything in order to be regenerated, but on the contrary He shows us that those who are regenerated, or "quickened", by the Spirit are regenerated or quickened *even when* (or *while*) they are "dead in sins" (Eph. 2:5). How could they have otherwise been "quickened" or given life? They could not have

been *given life* if they had *already been* alive. And of course we are speaking here of *spiritual life*.

The unregenerate man—the man who has not been born of the Spirit—the “natural man”—does not have spiritual life and does not receive, or understand, the things of the Spirit of God: “for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” or understood (See I Cor. 2:14). Not having been born into the spiritual realm, he knows nothing *of* the spiritual realm. So far as he is concerned it does not exist. That anyone should even think there *is* such a realm is foolishness to him. In *that* realm he cannot function, for he is not *in* that realm. And even if he believed there *was* such a realm he would have no desire to be in it, for he is spiritually dead. He has not been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10) and consequently he has no existence in that realm. It is not a case that he *could* know them but won’t try, but it is a case that he *cannot* know them (See again I Cor. 2:14). He has no means at his disposal by which he can receive or discern them, for he as yet is not a spiritual being. He is of the earth, earthy, and earthy he will remain until or unless God “quickens” him into divine life. He is a corrupt creature and is walking “according to the course of this world...in the lusts of his flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (See Eph. 2:2-3). And only *mercy* can deliver him, for he doesn’t *want* deliverance. He is content where he is and doesn’t even know he *needs* to be delivered. He is spiritually dead, and spiritually dead he will remain until or unless God reaches down into the horrible pit and the miry clay and lifts him out, sets his feet upon a rock, establishes his goings, and puts a new song in his mouth, even praises to his God (See Psalm 40:2-3).

If the unregenerate could love the Lord, especially enough to “accept Him as his personal Saviour” as the arminian says he must do in order to be born again, then he could do anything else the *regenerate* can do and would not need to be born of the Spirit in the first place. He would already be possessed of every ability that the regenerate possesses. And if he could thus *act* in the spiritual realm he would not need to be translated *into* the spiritual realm. He

would already *be* there. But this is exactly why regeneration *must* precede any spiritual activity on the part of a sinner.

Once a person ever gets straight on this one point he can never again be at home with the arminian system of human merit and creature righteousness. He will then know what *salvation by grace* really is, and he will see the true place for good works in the life of a child of God—to glorify God for what He has done in showing mercy, not to use as a bargaining chip to purchase eternal life. —
Editor.

GOD HAS MADE A WAY

Life will deal its heavy blows
As we meet with bitter foes
But in spite of all our woes,
God has made a way.

Tho there seems no way to turn
Thru deep sorrows we will learn
And at last we will discern,
God has made a way.

Tho our path be dark and grim
And our light seems ne'er so dim
We are still secure in Him,
He has made a way

Tears may often stain our eyes
But our hoping never dies
For by grace we realize,
God has made a way.

From the pit of near despair
We will feel His tender care
And will find each time we're there,
He has made a way.

When we come to face the end
God will timely comfort send
And with Him we shall ascend,
He has made a way.

Then forever we will sing
Praises to our God and King
For the blessings He did bring,
When He made a way.

12-29-96

R.E.H.

THE COMMISSION'S FRAME

The Book of Acts begins where the Gospels leave off, and it ends where the Epistles begin, and thus it serves as an essential link between the two. It gives much information about the origin of the church and its spread throughout the known world. Every chapter, and sometimes every verse, gives a new precedent or new instruction to Christians. For those who wish to follow the old paths, the study of this book is vital.

The Jews challenged our Lord's authority throughout His ministry, but Jesus proved His authority by His perfect life, His death, and His resurrection. Upon this knowledge, and upon their love for Him, Jesus established His kingdom on earth. His apostles knew full well who He was. Seeing that He intended His church to be a permanent institution, before He ascended Jesus gave the apostles their instructions. (And He did give it to His apostles, not to anyone else.) As He sent them out to their work Jesus framed His command with the one thing that would make them succeed, His own presence and power.

There are those who believe the Lord gave this command to the church itself. There are also those teachers who believe that all preachers have the authority our Lord gave His apostles. Neither can succeed. God did not turn His kingdom over to men to do as

they would, for He knew what men were. It would be foolish to think that God would pay such a price for His church as the life of His own son, only to leave its future in the hands of frail men. The church has always been God's special care. For this reason our Lord prefaced the commission with a statement of His own complete authority (Matt. 28:18), and concluded it with a promise to go with them to the end of the world. Any man who thinks the apostles were free to go where they pleased and do what they pleased, is in darkness on this matter. No one of them went into all the world as we know it, but each according to his own gifts went where he was sent. Where they could not go in person, by the Spirit's work their teaching and writing went, and continues to go, into all the world.

The apostles were the very princes of earth, none were better qualified for their work. But they were not qualified to take control of such an important issue as the church. At the time the commission was given, some did not even believe in His resurrection (Mark 16:14). There was a great reluctance in them to obey His commands, for they preferred to stay at home in Jerusalem. (We remember Peter's reluctance to go to Cornelius.) Our Lord had told them he was sending them as sheep among wolves, and after seeing the Lord's crucifixion they could well believe it. Like many yet today, some had a bold opinion of their own judgments, as Peter who called upon the disciples to cast lots to choose someone to fill the place vacated by Judas. Is this how the Lord chooses His ministry? But the Lord had instructed them all to tarry until they were endued with power from on high, which spirit was the Lord Himself. When people don't know what to do, it is a pretty good idea to tarry till the Lord tells them.

Thomas spoke to Jesus thus, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). Would we choose for a witness a man who admitted that he did not know? or would we prefer men who ran to hide in time of trials? or who preferred fishing to the ministry? The Master's answer was, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Here lies the basic issue: it is not how to find a religious

organization that pleases us, nor is religion an empty social activity. True religion is a question of who can worship God acceptably, and how they are to do it. It is His church, not our own, neither are we our own. God always has the last word.

When the Lord's Spirit works upon men, great things happen, strange miraculous things, things we never expected. Pentecost found Peter standing to preach things he had not understood before, to a people who had been formerly totally devoted to the Jewish system. The result was, he helped baptize three thousand of them. Later, by the same Spirit Peter faced the very men who had crucified his Lord, and boldly spoke the truth. Gone were his reluctance, his prejudices, his reverence for men pretending to be holy, and he stood, this time, in defense of his Lord. Thus in spite of human frailties God separated His men from the world.

Jesus had told His disciples, Other sheep I have that are not of this (the Jewish) fold. Them also I must bring. Who but God would have considered such a man as Saul of Tarsus to be the one to bring them? Who but God could have wrought such a change in him? If any man thinks himself capable of saving souls, I ask, wouldn't you love to have been the first man to preach to Saul of Tarsus? My friend, you don't have to go into all the world looking for those other sheep. If you are a gentile believer (and most of us are), then you are those other sheep Jesus spoke of. Our Lord has brought you home, just as He promised.

The Book of Acts relates many such strange things. Who but God would have thought of subjecting Paul and Silas to prison, in order to establish a church at Philippi? Or to have made them prisoners so that His Bible might be written? Paul's very rebellion against God became a qualification for the ministry to the gentile people, for he was such a debtor, such a prisoner, he dared not refuse to go. Believe me, Paul did not become qualified to be a preacher by going to any school but God's. Nor can we.

The saints of God do not go to church to hear what great things men have done. They want to hear the great things God has done, and they want to see the ministers as humble servants of God.

Sometimes they may tell, as the apostles did, of times they wished to do things but were prevented, and other times when they were required to do things they did not want to do, and were given grace sufficient. The church today is just as dependant upon the Lord as were those in old times. God will not fail.

ELDER RAYMOND WEBB

EVERY MAN A LIAR

We ought always to keep before our minds certain pictures from the scriptures. They remind us of principles that should govern our lives. Perhaps we can make a composite photograph mentally of three notable events: the young Jesus sitting in the midst of the doctors of the law, questioning them; bold John the Baptist telling Herod that it was not lawful to have his brother's wife; and Elijah standing alone against all the hundreds of the prophets of Baal. In each of these we see a holy boldness brought on by the fact that the cause these three were standing for was true and right.

Popularity, learning, fame, and self-assurance are formidable opponents. More than one good man has been cowed down when facing them. All of them are found in the modern religions of this world and are loudly trumpeted by them. The size of the church membership, the degrees held by the pastor, the theatrics with which he holds forth in his oratory - all of these can serve to give an aura of validity in the minds of some to even the most absurd religious pretensions.

Many questions can be asked about our religion, but there is only one that matters. Are we true in God's eyes? Is our doctrine true, is our love true, is our conduct truly becoming to a child of God? In the face of all the clutter of claims of worldly religions, only this question need be answered: Does God consider our religion to be true? Our Lord, John the baptist and old Elijah stood alone in the face of learning, numbers and political power, but their hearts were true and their religion was true.

I value most highly the opinions of my close friends and especially my brethren in the church. When I face some difficult situation it is their counsel that I seek. To know that they are with me in spirit is a tremendous help to my poor, beleaguered soul. From time to time I must test my resolve, however, with this question: Would I stand alone if the cause were true? Standing with a few of those we love is not hard, but it is most trying to have to stand completely alone. Would I be willing to forsake all, even those closest to my heart, and follow Christ, or would I “go a-fishing” when events turned against me? It is a question I need to answer.

We need to keep in mind those whose paths were true, even in the face of opposition, who were content to let God be true, and every man a liar. Their examples are worth our sober consideration.

ELDER MARK GREEN

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“These things I command you, that ye love one another” (Jn. 15:17).

The church cannot function without love. The rules which govern her conduct demand it. Without it she would be no different from the world, and if her members do not manifest it a church will appear much like the world and indeed the world may have crept into her to such an extent that she will lose her identity. The scriptural example and precept is to edify or build up one another, not devour one another.

Love within a church makes her function smoothly, as she should, as any healthy body does. In a healthy organism each member provides something that the whole body needs. “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body *unto the edifying of itself in love.*” Without love there is no edifying. Without it, instead of spiritual growth and prosperity, there is death.

The nature of the church assumes love. Without it, the members

would be constantly having to look behind them to make sure someone was not stabbing them in the backs. The church would "lock up like a drum" as far as doing anything it should be doing, much like an automobile's functioning will stop when there is sand in the gearbox. Worship ceases where malice and envy abound. Certainly we cannot expect the presence of our Lord to be manifested in a place where his explicit command to love one another is ignored.

Jesus Christ did not suggest that we love one another; he did not say it would be best if we did it. He plainly commanded us to do it. It is not something that is to be optional with us. The characteristics of love are not at our discretion either. They are described for us in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 13. Love is to be longsuffering and kind, not easily provoked, and rejoicing in the truth, etc.

"Brethren, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

ELDER MARK GREEN

THE BURDEN OF THE MINISTRY

One of the characteristics and identifying marks of the apostolic church was a God-called and Spirit-qualified ministry. It is the belief of Primitive Baptists today that God, by His Holy Spirit, still "calls" men to preach the gospel of His Son.

There is a great difference in a man "seeking the office" and being "called of God" to preach. The type is given to us in the Old Testament in the priesthood who were chosen of God and did not take the honor unto themselves. "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). It is said to be a gift of God (See II Tim. 1:6 & I Tim. 4:14).

The church has not been as careful as they should have been in ordaining men to the ministry. Our Lord, who possessed all knowledge and knew the secrets of all hearts, spent a whole night in prayer on a mountain alone and when the day broke chose His twelve apostles from among His disciples. The church today sometimes

will ordain a man to the ministry who only has a "desire" to preach and does not possess the burden, with very little prayer or supplication to God about the matter. The Bible is plain on this and teaches very explicitly to "lay hands suddenly on no man," (I Tim. 5:22) and to "let them first be proved" (I Tim. 3:6, 10). There have been occasions when men were ordained who were not called to preach but would have filled a good place in the church as deacons or in other ways.

It might be asked, "How shall we know?" John teaches the church to "try" or "test" the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world (John 4:1). By their fruits we shall be able to know a good tree from a bad, but sometimes a man is ordained before he has time to bear any fruit at all. If he is a false gift it would be far better for him and the church to find this out before he is ordained than afterward. If he is a true gift it will be manifested also, and he will be humble and patient and not seek the office.

There is a good lesson on this in Proverbs 25:14, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Also Jude, verses 12, 13, "These are spots in your feasts of charity...feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds..."

The doctrine of God drops as the rain, and there must be clouds to have rain, and like the cloud that Elijah's servant saw, it may be little, the size of a man's hand, but if the Lord is in it, there will be rain. A true servant of the Lord is burdened down with the weight of the ministry, and like Noah of old, he moves with fear in what he does, and by faith looks to God for his directions. There is going to be some rain in a cloud the Lord sends, and the tender plants of God's vineyard are going to be fed. They are not only going to be taught but they are going to be *fed while they are taught*.

The wisdom of men has never been sufficient to teach a man to preach the gospel. Theological schools have been seats of heresies and even infidelity. Practically all false doctrines have originated there. In the "schools of the prophets" mentioned in the books of

Samuel and Kings there is not a record of a “true prophet” being trained there! Elisha, a true prophet, had to throw in some meal into a pottage that these “trained prophets” had thrown deadly wild gourds into (II Kings 4:38-41). He also told these “sons of the prophets” to hold their peace (II Kings 2:3). The wicked king Saul was in this “school” (I Sam. 10:5-12).

We are to pray that God, the Lord of the harvest, would send laborers into His harvest, and then take care of those the Lord sends. The man called of God is to pray and seek the wisdom that God alone can give and study His word as a guide to what he preaches. God’s Spirit will lead us and guide us into all truth. The ministry carries with it a burden—it is not a joy-ride or a pleasure trip—and only those who are called of God will ever feed the church of God. —**Elder T. L. Webb, Jr.** *Reprinted by request. Source and date were not given.*



SOME FAITHFUL ONES

“And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear” (I Sam. 15:14).

By reading the preceding verses of this chapter it will be seen that Saul had disobeyed the Lord, and later Saul said he did it because he feared the people. How necessary it is that the servant of God should be as bold as a lion. The cause is at stake. There should be no influence from without or within that should turn him from obeying the Master. Just as sure as there is a disturbance in the church of God, just that sure someone or ones have disobeyed the Lord. We may claim we are innocent, but Samuel knew there was a cause for the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen.

Let the sheep represent God’s innocent children, and the oxen represent God’s faithful servants, and Saul those who are not satisfied with the church as to her doctrine and practice, and I think you will have the lesson in the text at the head of this article. No doubt in my

mind God's people sometimes have a fleshly desire to be like the nations around them. Israel did. Especially is this so with the leaders in numbers of instances, but it always brings trouble to the church of God. God's church is a peculiar people, and they are not of the world. They had just as well be content with the "old paths;" they can never have "new paths." We have only one lawgiver.

I am not afraid of the church going to ruin, but I am afraid that Zion may have much sorrow by the introduction of new things among us. I do fear that the faithful old oxen who have borne the heat and burden of the day for these many years may groan and sigh on account of seeing a once happy and united people disturbed and torn up.

I worked oxen a little when I was a boy. I have seen the lead steers try to run away, but the old wheel oxen would set their feet in front of them, and the lead steers could pull their heads off before they could run away with the wagon; and so it is, has been, and will be, in the church of God. There will always be some who are satisfied with the church as Christ left it, and not only so, but will defend it, no matter what it costs. Deep down in my poor heart I thank God for His faithful ones. —**Elder S. N. Redford**, *The Primitive Baptist*, 1940.

LIVING STONES

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

The term "living stones" seems as inconsistent as it would to speak of cold fire or hot ice. How can stones be alive? is a question that suggests itself at once to our minds. It is impossible that literal stones should live, and yet inspiration uses this figure to describe the character of the material that has been brought unto the spiritual house of God. How are we to understand this? It can only be understood by knowing that those who have been quickened into divine life by the spirit of God were as lifeless as stones prior to that

quickenings. They were not dead like eggs, unless it be rotten eggs, but dead like stones. They were powerless to choose a place in the spiritual house of God, or to move toward that house, or to prepare themselves for a place in that house, as the literal stones are to make a choice, motion, or preparation for a place in a stone building. In this view of the matter only is it proper to call them stones.

Aaron's rod was made to put forth blossoms, which was no greater a miracle than that which is wrought upon every true, quickened, spiritual child of God. The felling of Saul of Tarsus to the ground is as great a wonder as the causing of Lazarus to break the cerements of the tomb, and it was performed by the same omnipotent hand. Those who have not Christ have not the peculiar life that those have who possess Him in their souls. See I John 5:12. Such are entirely alienated from the life of God, and are destitute of eternal life, which is the gift of God, as literal stones are of any kind of life.

These living stones were originally in the same quarry as the others of the human family, and lay there till they were dug out and separated and vitalized and hewn for the spiritual building. Back of the very beginning of this work of preparation there was a choice made of them, which is signified by the term *also* in our text. It is said of Christ that He is the "living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious." The word *also* relates to that fact, and signifies that the same is true of all the lively stones of the building; that is, that they were also chosen of God and precious. The inspired writer confirms this by an Old Testament passage, "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious." He shows that every stone that enters into the construction of this noble edifice has been as much and as certainly chosen to fill its place therein as was Christ, the chief corner stone.

This choice of them was with a view or intention of making them fit for the place for which they were chosen. It was made in infinite wisdom, so that there can be no failure in the preparation they are to receive. It cannot be possible that the chooser saw He would fail in preparing them for a place for which He chose them. He is the

wisest of architects, and the whole building stood complete before Him in His infinite mind before He laid the foundations of the earth or stretched the curtains of the heavens abroad. It will be as complete when finished as when it stood back there in His eternal purpose.

In the preparation of these stones, the Holy Spirit is Christ's only Vicar on earth. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; nothing else can, and this quickening is necessary to make them "lively stones." The experience that attends this is more or less one of pounding, thumping and stripes. The afflictions of the righteous are many, but their deliverance is ever certain and compensating (Psalm 34:19).

Look at the work of shaping stones! See how the workman hammers and chisels and saws and scrapes! The stones are lifted and turned and squared. They are taking on symmetrical shape, however, which gives beauty and strength. Likewise consider the mournful experience of the living stones of God's spiritual house. How sad they are as they mourn over their sins! But has not the builder said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?" How dejected they feel as they consider their great poverty of spirit! But has not the wise and good architect declared, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven?" The trial of their faith is more precious than of gold that perishes, therefore they are often in great heaviness through manifold temptations. But the end of all this is that their faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Their chastening is not for the present joyous, but grievous, yet it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them that are exercised thereby.

The preparation of these stones is so accurate that the building will go together "without the sound of a hammer," and thus it grows "unto an holy temple in the Lord," the stones being "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." In all this the builder is active and the stones are passive. The building will finally stand as a monument of glory to the name of the great builder, every stone showing the infinite depth of His wisdom and knowledge and the exquisite skill of His hand.

“Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heav’n the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

Here is a holy priesthood as well as a spiritual house. By this priesthood are offered up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. These sacrifices are called spiritual in distinction from the legal sacrifices and also because offered in a spiritual manner by the influence of the Spirit of God. They are the prayers, praises, thanksgiving and active obedience of these lively stones. Any stone that is not quickened, no matter how brightly its outside polish may shine, cannot offer up such sacrifices, for they come only from lively or living stones.

Vegetable and animal matters are decaying even in the midst of their living state, but how durable are the stones! The durability of these lively stones is especially assured, for Jesus gives them eternal life and declares they shall never perish, and that none shall pluck them out of His hand. The heavens shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, but while eternity rolls its endless duration along, these lively stones stand up as an holy temple, lasting as the God that built it, sending forth symphonies of praise, honor and glory to the Redeemer’s name forever and ever. —**Elder John R. Daily**, *Zion’s Advocate*, 1905.

PROPER ORDER

In all cases we should remember that as individuals and as churches we are fallible, sinful, and liable to err or do wrong in many ways, and hence we need to bear with one another, and that in order to get along consistently and in reasonable peace here as church members and as citizens of this world, we have to crucify the affections and lusts of the flesh and endure many hard and hurtful things.

“A church may be guilty of an error, or of some gross inconsistency; still that does not justify any other church or churches

in rising up and arbitrarily ignoring her as a church. Until such erring church has been regularly or gospelly labored with and withdrawn from by her sister churches, she should be honored by them as a church, though she be guilty of some irregularity, or of something else of which they very much disapprove." —*Order and Disorder*.

To ignore, censure, and condemn churches or individuals without fair trial and investigation, and without giving them ample time and opportunity to speak for themselves, and to make such explanation and defense as they desire to make and have a legal and reasonable right to make, is utterly unbrotherly, unscriptural, and contrary to the principles of common sense and simple justice. —Elder G. W. Stewart, *The Gospel Messenger*, 1917.

PREPARED FOR THE FAMILY

Noah built the ark for *his* family, not for the world. The people were chosen for the ark *before* the ark was built. It was built for *them*. I repeat, it was built for Noah and HIS FAMILY and not for the world. Upon this I challenge contradiction. Just so did God make choice of His people before He sent Christ into the world upon His mission of salvation. God saw them, He chose them, He gave them to Christ, their names were written upon the breast-plate of His love and engraven in the palms of His hands. He came to save HIS PEOPLE from their sins (See Matt. 1:21). "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me" was the testimony of Christ Himself as He prayed to the Father.

The world would change this figure and would have it that Noah prepared this ark for no one in particular, but everyone in general, and that he did not know when he prepared it if anyone would go into it, but that all the world could be accommodated in it if he could only get them to go into it, and that in like manner Jesus prepared the ark of salvation large enough for the whole world, yet for no one in particular, and that when He prepared it He did not

know if a single soul would be saved. Away with such a thought!

Fight the doctrine of election as you may, this argument drawn from this figure which God Himself gave us will stand impregnable against all the assaults of the wisdom of this world. Dear child of God, you —YOU were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The world says you were not, and many of you are living with a people who declare you were not, and you by your actions are assenting to their declarations, but God says you were. Whom shall you believe? (See Eph. 1:4).

Can you afford to longer give your influence to the denial of inspiration while your heart is in love with this truth? Can you not, like Moses, choose rather to suffer affliction with those who believe and defend the truth of God, though it may mean persecution, tears, and blood? You were chosen and given to Christ before He came down from heaven (John 6:38-39). The world says you were not; Christ says you were. Whose testimony will you accept? Can you deny this plain declaration and still claim Jesus as your Lord and Master?—**Elder William H. Crouse**, 1918.

NEWS NOTES

UNION MEETINGS

THUMB RUN (Near Marshall, Va.) —Third Sunday, May 18, and Saturday before. All day both days. —**Elder Raymond Pressley**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 948-4337.

ROBINSON RIVER (Brightwood, Va.) —Fourth Sunday, May 25, and Saturday before. All day both days. Services will be held at the church. —**Elder Toliver Utz**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 948-4803.

GOOSE CREEK (Markham, Va.) —Fifth Saturday, May 31. All day Saturday beginning at 10 a.m. Scheduled visiting minister, *Elder W. C. Mintz*. Regular services will be held on Sunday, June 1, beginning at 10:30 a.m. —**Elder Forest N. Atwood**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 743-9488.

ALMA (Alma, Va.) —First Sunday, June 1, and Saturday night before at 7:30. Scheduled visiting minister, *Elder W. C. Mintz*. —**Elder Ernest M. Long**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 778-2763.

LITTLE FLOCK (Amelia, Va.) —Second Sunday, June 8, and Saturday before. All day both days. (This is also communion time). —**Elder Raymond Pressley**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 948-4337.

BARROWS RUN (South of Warrenton, Va.) —Fourth Sunday, June 22, and Saturday before. All day both days. —**Elder Raymond Pressley**, Pastor. Ph. (540) 948-4337.

HAWKSBILL REQUESTS ORDAINED HELP

Hawksbill Primitive Baptist Church north of Stanley, Virginia, is requesting ordained help in order to form a presbytery for the purpose of considering the ordination of Brother Eddie Wayne Wilson to the office of deacon. The scheduled date for this meeting is Saturday afternoon, May 17. The pastor of Hawksbill is Elder Ernest M. Long. For more information contact him at (540) 778-2763.

NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Subscription renewals should be mailed to the Secretary-treasurer before the 20th of the month to be updated for the current issue of the paper. Subscription renewals received on or after the 20th of the month will be updated with the issue following the current one. For example, a renewal received on February 21st will be updated with the April issue.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR EXPIRATION DATE

Please check the label on your paper for the expiration date. Prompt renewals save time, postage, and helps financially. Your help is greatly appreciated.

OBITUARIES

SISTER LELIA BERDELL ANDERSON (88) passed from this walk of life on Friday, Jan. 24, 1997. She was born Aug. 3, 1908.

Sister Anderson was a member of *Barrows Run* Primitive Baptist Church south of Warenton, Virginia, and she attended every meeting of the church until she got sick.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Henry Anderson, who was ordained a deacon. Two sons also predeceased her.

She leaves to mourn her death four daughters, Elizabeth M. Kerns, Thelma I. Freeman, Lelia Margaret Kelley, and Nancy L. Ritenour; two sons, Elmer C. Anderson and Norman A. Anderson; four sisters, Elva Payne, Madeline Wilson, Lena Wilson and Erma Goetsinger; and one brother, Orvis M. Thorpe. She is also survived by 23 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren and 5 great-great-grandchildren. We all loved this little sister and will miss her very much. To know her was to love her.

Funeral services were conducted by her pastor Elder Raymond Pressley and Elder Toliver Utz. She was laid to rest at Orlean Cemetery beside her loving husband to wait for the resurrection of her body. In loving memory—**Elder Raymond Pressley.**

BROTHER JOHN M. HITE (84) became ill in November of 1996 and passed from this natural world Jan. 24, 1997, in his home west of Brush Ridge, Ohio, north of Marion. He was born in that same farmhouse on Nov. 19, 1912 to the late Elder Levi and Adah (Williams) Hite. His father baptized him in September of 1930, and on April 14, 1935, Brother John married Sister Martha Hanover, who survives. Also surviving are a daughter, Joyce, of Kettering, Ohio; three grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Brother John was a farmer and a devout member of *Rocky Fork* Primitive Baptist Church in Brush Ridge. He was ordained as a deacon of the church in October, 1948, and he served as Rocky Fork's deacon for almost 50 years. He also served as clerk of the Sandusky Association for 30 years.

The funeral service was held Jan. 28 at *Rocky Fork*, with Elders Durward Edwards and Nick Herald officiating. Interment was in the Grand Prairie Cemetery across the road from the Church.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

BROTHER CHARLES LANDON GIBSON, JR. (81) was born Jan. 10, 1916 and passed away Feb. 26, 1997.

Brother Charles joined *Thumb Run* Primitive Baptist Church in July of 1983 and was faithful to attend the meetings until bad health began.

He leaves to mourn his passing his wife, Gertrude E. Gibson; one daughter, Martha G. Crummett, two grandsons and a host of loved ones.

Funeral services were conducted by his pastor, Elder Raymond Pressley, at Royston Funeral Home in Marshall, Virginia. He was laid to rest at Orlean Cemetery to wait the resurrection of his body. In loving memory—**Elder Raymond Pressley.**

SISTER MAUDE LUCY WATERS HOAK (93) was a lifelong resident of Page County, born Feb. 28, 1903, the daughter of the late James H. and Lucy Ann Bywaters Waters. She passed away Feb. 6, 1997 at the home of her daughter in Luray, Virginia after suffering the effects of Alzheimer's and the complications of aging for a long duration.

She was greatly blest to have a daughter and family members to care for her in her time of need. We thank God for them, for their tender loving care to 'Aunt Maude' as she was known by many of us.

Sister Maude was a homemaker and a faithful member of *Alma* Primitive Baptist Church, attending services as long as she was able.

On April 19, 1930 she married Emmitt Monroe Hoak, who preceded her in death March 14, 1982.

She leaves to mourn her passing two sons, Donald Leon and Gailon Leroy Hoak, both of Luray; one daughter, Cornelia Ann Snyder of Luray; ten grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren; also many family members and friends.

Funeral services were held at the Bradley Funeral Home in Luray, Sunday, Feb. 9, 1997, with burial following in Beahm's Chapel Cemetery, Luray. Services were conducted by her pastor Elder Ernest M. Long and Elder Forest N. Atwood, Jr.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Written in loving remembrance, —**Elder Ernest M. Long.**

BROTHER ROSS WILLIAM PAYNE (88) of Berryville, Virginia was born April 3, 1908, the son of the late William and Emma Chadwell Payne, and passed away March 11, 1997 at the Winchester Medical Center. His sudden passing came as a great shock although he had a circulatory problem that was not thought to be life threatening.

Brother Ross was a World War II veteran, a retired farmer, and a devout member and deacon of *Hawksbill* Primitive Baptist Church. He faithfully attended the services as long as he was physically able. He was loved and respected by all who knew him, and will be sadly missed. However we are reconciled to the fact that our loss is his eternal gain. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

He is survived by his loving and faithful companion, Myrtle D. Payne and two sons, Ross W. Payne, Jr. of Williamsburg, Va., and Joshua Payne of Upperville, Va.; two grandchildren and many church members and friends.

Funeral services were held at the graveside Friday, March 14, 1997 with his pastor, Elder Ernest M. Long, officiating. Burial followed in the Ivy Hill Cemetery, Upperville, Va.,

Written in humble submission to our Saviour's righteous will.—**Elder Ernest M. Long.**

**DONATIONS TO THE
ADVOCATE AND MESSENGER, INC.**

Mabel D. Reed, Ind. \$10.00; Gladys L. Lomano, Fla., \$10.00; Idrys M. Davis, Tex., \$5.00; A Friend, Ark., \$20.00; Erma T. Goetzinger, Va., \$10.00; Thomas E. Whittington, Ms., \$5.00; William G. Cusac, Ohio, \$10.00; Donald E. Ferguson, Canada, \$5.00; June Tyler, Tex., \$30.00; North Fork Primitive Baptist Church, Va., \$10.00; Donald L. Atwood, Va., \$10.00.

"I am found of them that sought me not" (Isa. 65:1). Thus God manifested Himself to the Gentiles, by sending the light of the gospel among them when they were so far from seeking Him and asking after Him that they were following after lying vanities and serving dumb idols. Was not this our own particular case? Did not God begin in love, and manifest Himself to us when we did not ask after Him? And was not that a time to be often remembered with great thankfulness?

LITTLE FLOCK - 9 miles southeast of Amelia, Va., take Rt. 38 out of Amelia to Rt. 614, left on Rt. 608, right on 677 at church sign, church on left; 1st. Sun. 10:30 a.m., 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 10:30 a.m.; Communion 2nd Sunday in June; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Kim Watley, Clerk, 13671 Lodore Road, Amelia, Va. 23002, Tel. (804) 561-2133. July '98

MARTINSBURG - Martinsburg, W. Va., Corner Wilson St. and New York Ave.; meets 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Phillip Johnson, Pastor, P. O. Box 283, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-3118; Clerk, L. E. Farley, 9526 Downsville Pike, Williamsport, Md. 21795, Tel. (301) 223-6195. Mar. 2000

MILL CREEK - Approx. 2 miles west of Luray, Va. - off of Rt. 211 on Rt. 766 on the Hamburg Road - Meeting house is on the east side of the road; Meets 2nd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Road, Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Bro. Gary Bauserman, Clerk, 148 N. Egypt Bend Rd., Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-5014. April '98

NORTH FORK - Held in Upperville Primitive Baptist Church, Upperville, Va. 2nd Sunday 10:30 a.m. Elder J. Frank Coppedge, Pastor, SR4, Box 176A, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4357; Sister Elsie S. Payne, Clerk, 571 Curry Springs Place, Hamilton, Va. 20158-9526, Tel. (540) 338-5531. May '98

ROBINSON RIVER - Brightwood, Va. on U.S. Rt. 29; Meets 2nd Sun. at 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 2:00 p.m.; 4th and 5th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder J. Tolliver Utz, Pastor, S.R. 5, Box 540, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4803; Aubrey E. Utz, Clerk, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4360. Dec. '98

THIRD SUNDAY

HAWKSBILL - Approx. 2 miles north of Stanley, Va., turn east off of Rt. 340 on Hawksbill Ave. (church sign on the right), go to the intersection of Farmview Road and turn right, church is on the left; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday night before at 7:30 p.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Rd., Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Sister Helen L. Huffman, Clerk, Rt. 1 Box 309, Shenandoah, Va. 22849, Tel. (540) 652-8625. April '98

MT. BETHEL - Three Churches, W. Va.; Services 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Douglas Heare, Pastor, H. C. 63 Box 2320, Romney, W. Va. 26757. Tel. (304) 822-3228; Wilson Saville, Clerk, R. R. 2, Box 78, Oldtown, Md. 21555, Tel. (301) 478-5253. Aug. '97

NEW HOME - Covington Co., Ala., From Gantt, Ala. go west 5 mi. on 82 to 23 and take the right; Coming from Red Level, go east on 82 to 23 and take the left, go 4/10 mi. and take the right on 7, go 3 mi. on pavement and 1 1/2 mi. after pavement ends, turn at church sign at top of Clay Hill, Church 1/4 mi.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ralph Harris, Pastor, 3687 King Rd., Caryville, Fla. 32427, Tel (904) 547-4615; Bridgman Harris, Clerk, 386 E. Saunders Rd., Lot E. 514, Dothan, Ala., Tel. (334) 792-5614. Mar. '97

SIDLING HILL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - near Needmore, Pa., take 522 north to Needmore through town, second left on state road 655, three miles to Y in the road, take left to stop sign, take left 1/4 mile, sign on left to the church, 5 miles from Needmore, Pa.; Services each 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m. except for the month of March; Needmore Primitive Baptist Church meets 3rd Sunday in March at 10:30 a.m.; Elder William H. Payne, Pastor, 630 Warm Springs Road, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 722-4419; Sis. Alice Mellott, Clerk, RD 1, Box 1050, Needmore, Pa. 17238, Tel (717) 573-2885. Oct. '97

SOUTH RIVER - Browntown, Va.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Sister Marie Partlowe, Clerk, 2209 Gooney Manor Loop, Bentonville, Va. 22610, Tel. (540) 635-4718. July '97

THORNTON GAP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - Near Sperryville, Va.; Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Wayne Baldwin, Clerk, P.O. Box 572, Culpeper, Va. 22701, Tel. (540) 825-8394. July '97

THUMB RUN - Near Marshall, Va., Take Rt. 647 off of Rt. 55 (Flint Hill Road) about 5 miles, turn left off 733 - about 2 miles to the church; Coming off Rt. 211 on 688 (Orlean Road), turn right on Rt. 732 in Orlean, Approx. 4 miles to Church, Meets 3rd Sunday and Saturday before at 10:30 a.m., Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P. O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mrs. Clydie Klopp, Clerk, 5867 Free State Road, Marshall, Va. 22115. April 2000

FOURTH SUNDAY

BARROWS RUN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 5 miles south of Warrenton, Va. on U.S. Route 29 and 15; 4th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mary Lee Olinger, Clerk, 67 Frazier Rd., Warrenton, Va. 22186, Tel. (540) 347-3538. Mar. '98

CEDAR CREEK - Frederick County near Marlboro, Va. on Rt. 722 and Cedar Creek Grade; Meets 4th Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Rd., Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Sister Carol B. Swanson, Clerk, 249 Dower Lane, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-8484. May '98

HAPPY CREEK - 202 Church St., Front Royal, Va., corner of Stonewall Dr. and Church St.; Meets 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday before the 4th Sunday at 6:00 p.m.; Elder Gary Utz, Pastor, 429 West Duck St., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 636-9434; Sister Hazel Priest, Clerk, 321 Blue Ridge Ave., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 635-4764. June '98

MT. CARMEL - South Broad St., Luray, Va.; Meets 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Forest N. Atwood, Jr., Pastor, Rt. 1, Box 271-B, Shenandoah, Va. 22849, Tel. (540) 652-6482; Reda J. Johnson, Clerk, 1064 Redman Store Road, Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-9488. Dec. '97

SALEM PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 9100 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Richmond, Va. 23225; Meets 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder James R. Kosch, Pastor, 168 Longstreet Ave., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401; Sis. Lynda Garner, Clerk, 112 Buckingham Dr., Colonial Heights, Va. 23834, Tel. (804) 526-2464. Dec. '97

UPPERVILLE, Va. - 4th Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Dwayne Fletcher, Pastor, 2456 Hunting Ridge Road, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 667-4756; Sister Bessanna Trussell, Clerk, 138 Steepwood Lane, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 662-1605. Dec. '97

WASHINGTON CHURCH - (Meets at Bethel Church) 9101 Leesburg Pike (Rt. 7), Vienna, Va.; Meets 2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Bill Dillon, Pastor, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854; Sis. Patty Dillon, Clerk, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854. Dec. '97

WHITE OAK - On the White Oak Road, about 6 miles east of Fredericksburg, Va.; Meets 2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Rodger Frazier, Pastor, 12045 N. Avey Rd., Remington, Va. 22734, Tel. (540) 439-3606; Betty Jo Lael, Clerk, 9701 Peppertree Rd., Spotsylvania, Va. 22553. March '97